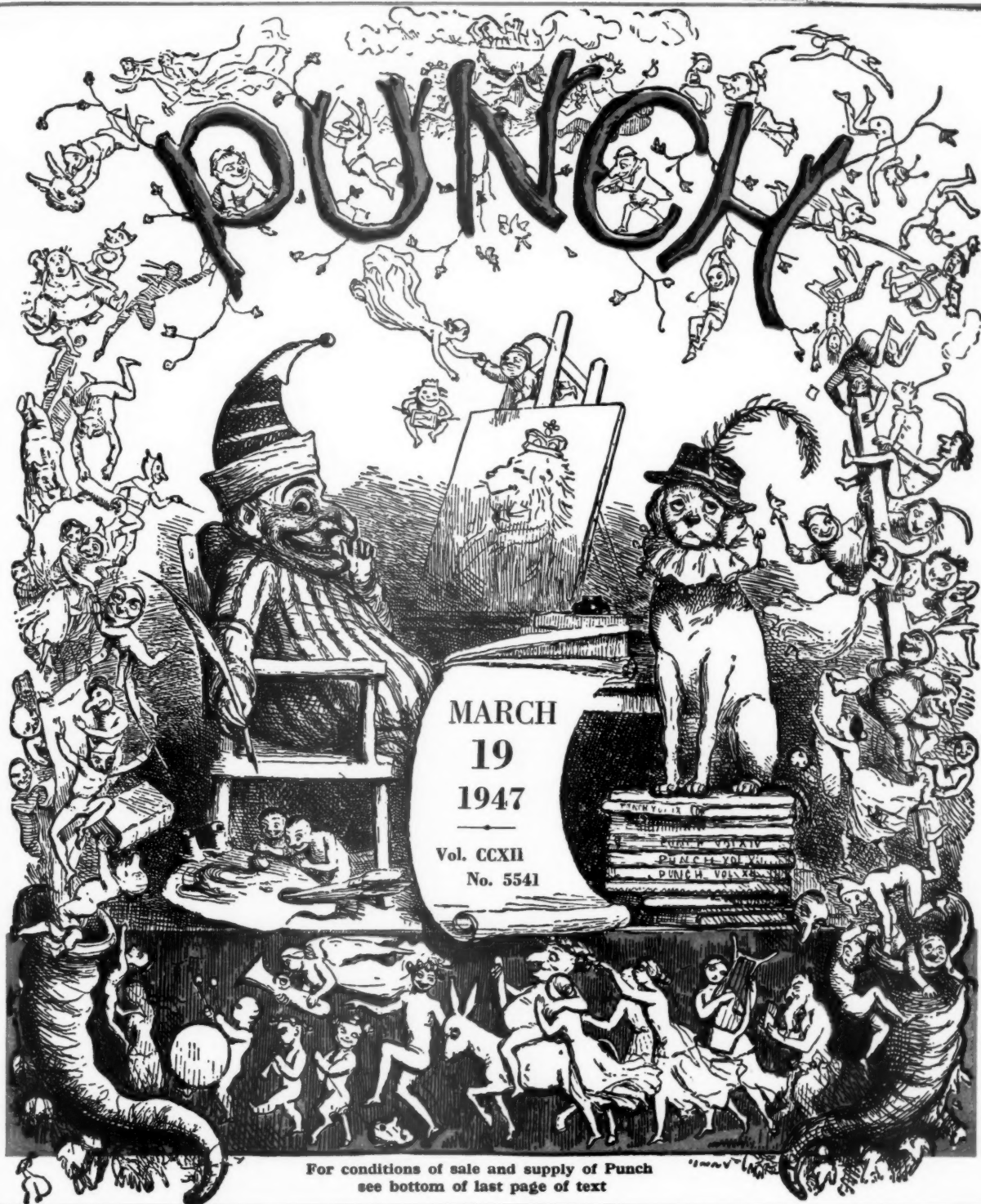


Huntley & Palmers *the first name you think of in* Biscuits



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text

PEOPLE ARE SAYING

Player's Please

MORE THAN EVER



CRITTALL WINDOWS



FOR THE NEW HOUSES

By specifying STANDARD metal windows—from British Standard 990 : 1945—you help to reduce the present unavoidable delay in delivery, and at the same time you ensure highest quality and lowest cost.

Ask for leaflet 115 B.

THE CRITTALL MANUFACTURING CO. LTD.
BRAintree, ENGLAND



It's always good to be on the inside looking out, especially if you look out from your own pleasant home. Soon you'll be able to make it more colourful and delightful than ever with the lovely new Sundour furnishing fabrics that'll be coming your way any time now.

Sundour

FINE FURNISHING FABRICS

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Sharp's SPECIALISE IN MAKING **TOFFEE**

EDWARD SHARP & SONS LTD
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"THE TOFFEE SPECIALISTS"



ESSENTIAL TO PRESENT-DAY DIET

Imperative to your body's welfare is an adequate supply of those essential vitamins, A and D. You can take these two in concentrated and convenient form in Crookes Halibut Oil. Nowadays, as much as during the war, this is a wise precaution against diet deficiencies.

CROOKES HALIBUT OIL

OBTAINABLE ONLY FROM CHEMISTS

Capsules, per bottle of 25, 2/6; 100, 8/6
Liquid, per phial, enough for 16 days 2/-

C 15



Where are all the good shoes going to in these days of quotas? Quite a lot of them to Manfield's shops which offer the newest American styles, the latest models of Brevitt, Vani-Tred, Norvic and Arch-Preserver besides Manfield's own creations. Whilst range varies from shop to shop, Manfield assistants at every branch will always do their best to help you find the shoes you want.



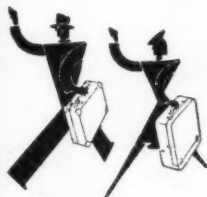
smart woman
... to get her
smart shoes
at
Manfield's



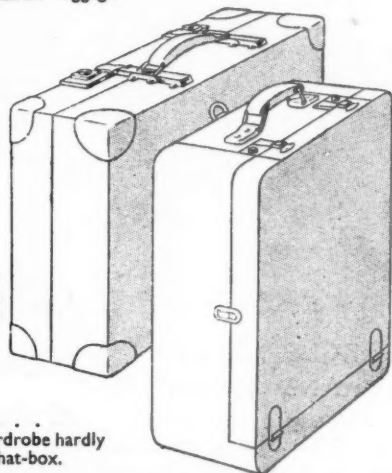
REVELATION

SCIENTIFICALLY *planned* LUGGAGE

What does it mean—"scientifically planned luggage"? With Revelation it means not only easy packing but luggage that keeps its shape and good looks. Everything goes into a Revelation. Dresses travel without creasing on their own hangers in the Rev-Robe. Clothes, books, shoes and odd parcels fit into the expanding Revelation suitcase. There's none of the bulge and strain that wears out ordinary cases. You'll be glad all your life that you chose Revelation luggage.



REVELATION SUITCASE
... the same case adjusts itself for a week-end, a week or a month.



REV-ROBE
The travel wardrobe hardly larger than a hat-box.

Owing to the shortage of raw materials supplies can only be available at luggage dealers occasionally

REVELATION SUITCASE CO. LTD., 170 PICCADILLY, LONDON, W.1
(Agents for Revelation Supplies Ltd.)



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Dorothy Gray
Regd

The Dorothy Gray Booklet will help you identify your skin. Booklet sent on request to Dorothy Gray Ltd., Raynes Park, S.W.20

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Thousands of women wait for her articles and advice: she cannot afford to go wrong. She sees all fashions in London, Paris and New York, but for herself it will always be one of those well cut, classical yet always so original "JAMEDON" Models.



Tailored in

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Fine worsted Borathea cloth in black, navy, brown, and in other shades.

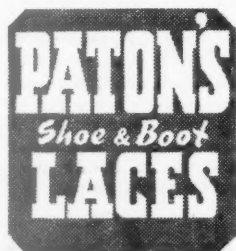
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FROM YOUR
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GAS serves the Nation

BRITISH GAS COUNCIL, LONDON, S.W.1

(52)



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A talented cut . . . clever shaping—worn open when you feel informal . . . closed for chic demure. At leading Fashion Houses and Stores.



with
Patented SPARE COLLAR

THE WAKEFIELD SHIRT CO., LTD.,
(Dept. 4), 126, Kirkgate, Wakefield, Yorks.



I say, old man, I fancy
that girl smiled at me!

Nonsense! She's only an advertisement.

Yes, but isn't she compellingly lovely!
Some women are like that . . .
positively breath-taking!

Personality has a lot to do with it.

I agree, old boy, a lot.



More than a Soap—a Beauty Treatment
1/10 PER TABLET (2 RATIONS)
Only from Britain's nicer Shops

You need not have a cold this winter!

If you are one of those people who have at least one cold every winter—who fall easy victims to 'flu—say to yourself NOW "I am NOT going to suffer this year". And act NOW. Go out straight away and buy a bottle of LISTERINE Antiseptic. Then, twice daily without fail, gargle with this pleasant, safe antiseptic. You may be unlucky, you may still fall a victim—science, unfortunately, knows of no absolute preventative of colds or 'flu. But in this way you do kill millions of harmful germs and halt the spread of infection. You will like using Listerine. It is so mild and safe. Don't delay—buy a bottle today.



GARGLE NIGHT AND MORNING

. . . It's so easy to form the habit of using this pleasant gargle twice a day. And Listerine is the surest possible means of protecting yourself from infection throughout the winter.



beautiful

pure round wool
of steadfast quality





Beautifully Tailored - full of ideas

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Have you ever thought how cleverly a concertina is constructed—how it expands and contracts times out of number? The fibres of Wool have a similar ability to expand and contract back to their original shape. That is why Wool, when creased, always straightens out again; why Wool is ideal for well-fitting garments; why Wool tailors beautifully and always keeps its shape.



★ Reason No. 1 *why*

**There is NO substitute for
Wool**

Issued by the International Wool Secretariat.

T.1

**Here is your
Fortune
my pretty maid!**



This is Marzipan Whirl,
one of the delicious chocolates
in Fortune



You'll love the gay box and
the crisp crinkly wrappings
that cup each chocolate!

CALEY

Here's Bouncer's sporting
young relation—the
Bounder, Brevitt's new
creation.



BOUNDERS • MADELEINE
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Anne Gilmour Ltd.

132 ST. VINCENT STREET
GLASGOW





By Appointment
Naval Outfitters to H.M. The King.

Gieves

LIMITED

Established 1785.

Royal Naval, Royal Air Force and
Civilian Outfitters.

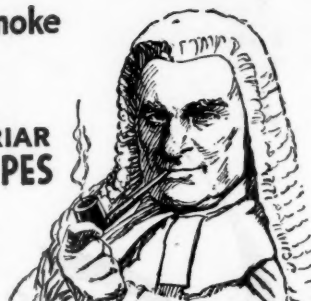
27 OLD BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1
and branches.

All shrewd Judges smoke

Orlik BRIAR PIPES

The demand for Orlik pipes far exceeds the supply, but the quality is still as good as ever. If you have difficulty in obtaining a genuine Orlik London-made pipe, please write to us for address of the nearest Tobacconist who may be able to supply you.

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17-18, Old Bond St., London, W.1
Established 1899



Also PETROL LIGHTERS & POUCHES
Orlik wind-proof Petrol Lighters give a sure light for cigarette or pipe, indoors or out. Orlik Pouches in a variety of styles.



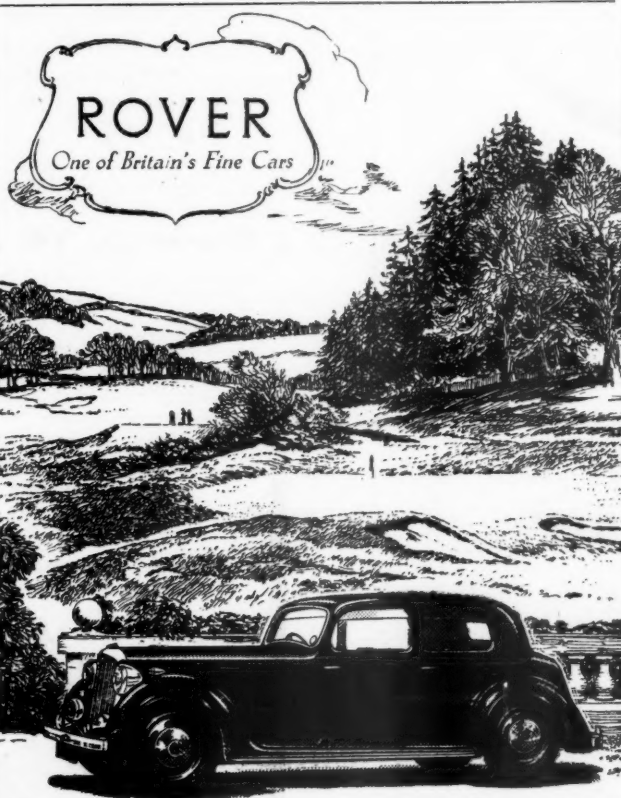
*The King's
Flight*

of Vickers Viking aircraft
now in South Africa for the
use of Their Majesties and
the Royal Princesses is
powered by 'Bristol' Engines
fitted with

**LODGE
PLUGS**

THE DAIMLER CARS
PROVIDED BY THE
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GOVERNMENT FOR
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ARE ALSO EQUIPPED
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Take
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SOLD EVERYWHERE. 1/3 & 3/- inc. Pur. Tax



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NEW HOUSING PLAN..



**Hollins
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MORE THAN A CENTURY'S EXPERIENCE WITH
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Activity
Durability
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We use no other brushes

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Don't
just say
Brandy
say

R.G.B.

Max. Retail Prices per bottle
R.G.B. Cognac*** 37/-
SIBON Liqueur Brandy 47/-

ROUYER GUILLET & CO. LTD. LONDON



WHAT'S HENRY V DOING IN NEW YORK ?

He's making history ! As recently as five years ago only a handful of people seriously thought that British films could recover and develop, so soon, into a national export of many times its pre-war value. Yet when the Two Cities film *Henry V* came to Broadway, New Yorkers stood in queues to see this great British picture. By the end of 1946 *Henry V* had already remitted to Britain more than \$400,000.



J. ARTHUR RANK ORGANISATION LTD

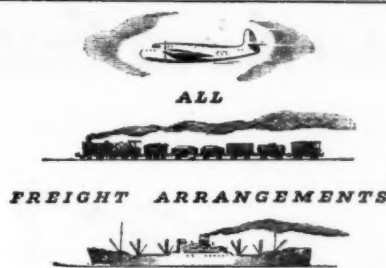


The invention of Pimm's No. 1, the Original Gin Sling, was an historic event. So it can hardly have been popular in pre-historic times. Which perhaps accounts for the uncivilised condition of the world in those days.

Pimm's No.1

The Original Gin Sling

WINE MERCHANTS HAVE LIMITED SUPPLIES FROM TIME TO TIME AT 27/6 PER BOTTLE



BY AMERICAN EXPRESS

Moving anything these days needs a considerable amount of planning and staff work. So think of the relief of having American Express to look after *everything* for you—all the formalities of shipments by air and steamer, the arranging of steamer space and marine insurance, attending to bills of lading and consular requirements, clearing goods through customs and arranging delivery or warehousing. We will see

to the removal abroad of household effects, or the shipment by steamer of excess air baggage. And because American Express are bankers, too, we can arrange to collect drafts against controlling documents or on a C.O.D. basis, or to provide documents necessary under Letters of Credit. So if you have any freight arrangements you want taken care of, just leave them to American Express.

AMERICAN EXPRESS World Service

THE AMERICAN EXPRESS CO. INC., 6 Haymarket, London, S.W.1
And at EDINBURGH, GLASGOW, LIVERPOOL & SOUTHAMPTON
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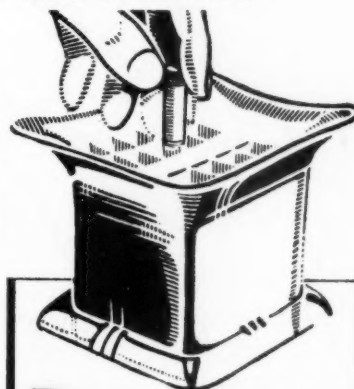


It's in...it's out!

WHEN YOU **DROP** YOUR
CIGARETTE IN THE RONSON ASHTRAY

Here is something new in ashtrays—an idea in a million, in fact. No stubbing is necessary. The cigarette can't smoulder, fume or fall out and **IT CAN'T START A FIRE.**

Once you use a Ronson Safety Ashtray you will never be satisfied with any other.



RONSON

FIRE PREVENTION
ASHTRAY

The cleverest ashtray ever designed

I saw this at Harrods



... a plastic cigarette box and ash tray to match, in delightful pastel shades. Chosen from the pleasing collection to be seen in the Fancy Goods department on the ground floor.

HARRODS

HARRODS LTD

SLOane 1234

LONDON SW1



*Always
ask for*

Batchelor's
— THEY'RE BEST !

ENGLISH CANNED FRUITS...VEGETABLES...SOUPS

BPIV/96



My luck's in!

Offer your Escudos only to those whom you know will appreciate them. Escudos are blended with extra care to give extra pleasure to Virginia smokers. Slightly bigger than normal—and very much better.



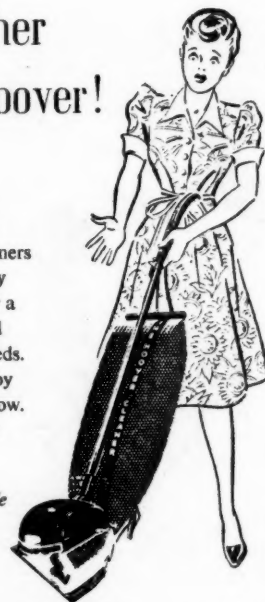
COPE'S
Escudo
CIGARETTES

20 for 2/6

Mrs. Jones and her
3/4 of a Hoover!

Well, perhaps it's not quite as bad as that, but a good many Hoover cleaners today must be less efficient than they might be. Have yours inspected by a qualified Hoover representative, and given any service attention it needs. Register for this home service now by filling in and posting coupon below. Especially if you have changed your address during or after the war.

As fast as Hoover Cleaners are made they are delivered to Authorised Hoover Dealers, sound people whom you can trust.



THE
HOOVER

REGISTERED
TRADE MARK

HOOVER LTD., (E.157) PERIVALE, GREENFORD, MIDDLESEX
Please register my name and address for the Hoover home service scheme.

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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXII No. 5541

March 19 1947

Charivaria

It is rumoured that in addition to Summer Time and Double Summer Time the Government plan an earlier Christmas this year to synchronize with Mr. Strachey's American turkey deal.

A south of England weather expert predicts that March will go out like a lamb. It came in, of course, like frozen mutton.

During the freeze-up bicycles were sometimes seen on the roads with icicles hanging from the handlebars. A correspondent suggests it was only because of the rime.

Power Politics?

"Mr. Thomson will not be assisted by a platform party but will have the aid of a machine tool distributor to emphasise his assertions."
"Greenock Telegraph."

We understand that the demand for a 40-hour week is prompted by the men's desire for more time to help their wives with the housework.

"SHORTER HOURS MEAN
QUICKER TURN-ROUND."
Headline, Trade paper.
Just clock-in and home again.

A Government official says that householders are getting slack in the salvaging of bones. They are also getting slack in the delivery of coal.

A correspondent says that any suggestion to have advertisements on pillar-boxes would meet with bitter opposition. Quite right. In fact "No Bill-Posting" notices on pillar-boxes might be useful.



An unusually high tide recently caused the sea to approach to within thirty yards of boarding-houses at an East Coast resort. One conscientious landlady is said to have taken the opportunity to throw a stone into it from her front door.

"A United Dairies spokesman said: 'The position is chaotic: we do not know where we are. Unless the weather gets better it will be far worse to-morrow.'"
"Evening News."

Quite the Air Ministry touch.

A City magnate is mentioned in a hobbies magazine as being the envied possessor of a unique collection of mugs. One seems to be born every minute, he says.

Laughing jackasses are frequently broadcast in Australia. For ourselves, we prefer the type of programme with no studio audience.



Taken at the Flood

I WAS sculling quietly up the High Street at the time, keeping a sharp look-out for cigarettes, just dipping an oar now and again to keep some way on her, if you understand me, when I heard Miss Collins call out to her friend Mrs. Cutler across the way. "Suet!" she cried, waving a little package above her head. "At Bates's."

Mrs. Cutler (purple hat, as usual) was in a medium-sized queue for potatoes just then, tied up behind Prettyman's old tub, with two or three boats of one kind and another taking up station aft, and she was still fumbling with the painter by the time I had gone about and got going again. But that's the luck of the game, and if you're well-placed for potatoes you've got to expect, in this imperfect world, to be out of the running for suet. My idea was to set a nice easy pace, keep going steadily but try not to look as if I had anything special in mind, and I was just considering the advisability of shipping oars for a moment and making play with lighting a cigarette, when I noticed the prow of Colonel Berridge's punt slipping up on my starboard side.

"Morning, Colonel," I said, gripping my oars. "Nice day."

"Ah, good morning," he said. "Think it's subsiding at all?"

Friendly enough. But the Colonel knows how to use a pole, when there aren't any tram-tracks, and I was anxious. I lengthened my stroke a trifle to test him, and almost imperceptibly the punt continued to creep up.

"So long as we don't get any more rain," I said, driving hard down on the stretcher.

"Let's hope not," said the Colonel airily.

During this exchange of courtesies Mrs. Berridge had been sitting, silent but smiling, up in the forward cushions, and it was when I saw her, with a pretty little air of being bothered by the sun, slip across to the stern seat and thus bring the bows of the boat out of the water that I knew the gloves were off.

"Well, I must be getting along, I suppose," I muttered, and drove my blades savagely into the reluctant flood.

"See you later then," said the Colonel, poling furiously to keep up.

The situation might have had its embarrassing side, but my attention was almost immediately distracted by the sudden appearance to port of Miss Lorna Prescott's red-and-yellow Rob Roy, and the purposeful backs of Mr. and Mrs. Prettyman coming up fast on the Colonel's right in a double-sculler. Perhaps a cable's length behind the Prettymans a ruck of boats of all descriptions were rounding the bend by Craddock's Garage, and out of the corner of my eye, as we shot past her gate, I caught a glimpse of old Mrs. Rumble furiously striving to clear her moorings in the face of our combined bow-wave. News travels fast in this village.

I took stock of the position. Another two minutes' hard going would bring the leaders to the cross-roads, where the Marlingham road comes in, and some two hundred yards beyond that is Bates's shop, at the corner of Whiston Lane. Clearly the Wool Shop was the place for one's big effort, and to keep something in reserve for it I steadied my pace and allowed the Colonel and the Prettymans to clear me by a length. Miss Prescott, deciding, I like to think, to keep an eye on her most dangerous opponent, fell back with me. Thus it was that we both avoided the worst shock of the catastrophe at the cross-roads.

I shall always think that Constable Savage was guilty of an error of judgment. He himself says that to hold up

Sir Hereward's wherry, which was beating up from Marlingham with a cargo of company directors, would have been contrary to etiquette, besides being more than his place was worth, and everyone agrees that it would undoubtedly have been the act of a very brave man. But to attempt to hold up the main stream of traffic was undeniably the act of a madman. A punt, whatever the Highway Code may say, cannot pull up in its own length.

Colonel Berridge's punt did not even stop when it hit the constable's platform. Its elevated bows slid up on to the structure and took the policeman behind the knees with only just enough of a jar to throw the Colonel overboard. The punt swung broadside on and might, I think, have remained pivoted dangerously on the platform, if my own bows had not caught its swinging stern and brought the whole thing safely back into the water, where it sank.

"You were going too fast," said Mrs. Berridge, rising, without any resemblance to Venus, from the waves.

I was about to make a suitable reply when the wherry, disconcerted by an encounter with the Prettyman skiff, rode roughshod over the remnants of our fleet, and in the confusion I lost sight of Mrs. Berridge, preferring to offer my assistance to Miss Prescott, whose canoe had reared itself up at a most unseamanlike angle.

"Somebody will have to pay for this," she said bitterly.

"I'm fast on something."

"It's a 'No Parking' notice," I said, wading over. "But I doubt if they'll fine you."

Miss Prescott began to wring water moodily out of a corner of her jumper.

"Did you ever see such a sight?" she asked, and it crossed my mind to tell her that Mrs. Berridge looked even worse, to comfort her. But I saw she was referring to the general scene, and I was bound to agree that it was as bad a jam as even our little High Street has ever seen. The back-markers had come up now, and the clutter of boats and oars had to be seen to be believed. One small punt, I noticed, had gone through the window of Arkwrights and taken quite a quantity of hosiery aboard.

"Look at that!" said Miss Prescott.

I had to reason for a moment with a man in a straw hat who had the blade of his starboard oar hard against my waistcoat and was pulling too strongly for my comfort. But some evolution of the wherry's swept him away and I was able to turn and follow the direction of Miss Prescott's pointing finger.

Two hundred yards away, round the corner out of Whiston Lane a small boat was creeping, and we watched it tie up in a leisurely way at Bates's.

"Must have turned off down Martindale and over the Common, the snake," said Miss Prescott.

"Backwater stuff," I agreed bitterly.

Even at that distance there was no mistaking the purple hat.

H. F. E.

MR. PUNCH will welcome any of his readers to his Stand at the *Daily Mail* Ideal Home Exhibition, where he is exhibiting selected reproductions of his drawings on the home—ideal and otherwise. (Stand No. 449, First Floor, Empire Hall.)



A STROLL IN THE BALKANS

"Fancy meeting you here!"



"Switzerland hasn't changed much, has it?"

Misleading Cases

Haddock v. Oundle, Haddock v. Smith, Haddock v. The General Press, Haddock v. Flatter and the Bilious Weekly, Haddock v. Cooper

MR. Justice Ratchet, giving judgment to-day in the "*De mortuis*" case, said:

In this unusual series of actions, which for the general convenience have been heard together, the plaintiff, Mr. Albert Haddock, is suing a number of persons and papers for libel. Mr. Haddock, while a passenger in a small sailing-vessel which was proceeding southward along the coast of Labrador, had the misfortune to fall overboard. What is now known as "fog conditions", but the Court still prefers to describe simply as fog, prevailed. The crew did what they could, but were unable to pick up the plaintiff. On that coast at that time of the year

are many large icebergs, and in the sub-Arctic water no swimmer could be expected to survive for long.

Accordingly, on the return of the vessel to Newfoundland, the captain sorrowfully reported that the plaintiff must be presumed to have perished in the icy sea. The distressing news was telegraphed to London: obituary notices of the plaintiff's life and professional career appeared in many organs of opinion; and there was a fairly well-attended memorial service at St. Luke's, Brunswick Square.

But a few days later news came to this country that the plaintiff was still alive. Besides icebergs, there are numerous whales in those waters: and,

according to the plaintiff's story, which he has repeated in the box with a wealth of plausible detail, he was, like the prophet Jonah, swallowed by a whale. He contrasted vividly the warm interior of the mammal with the freezing grip of the ocean. He repelled, under cross-examination, the suggestion that the whale, being fitted with a trellis-like or "gridiron" structure in its mouth for the purpose of catching small fish, is quite incapable of swallowing a man—or perhaps I should now say, adult male personnel. Not all whales, the plaintiff assured the court, are thus constructed: and, if they were, what would become of the story of the prophet Jonah, which has

never yet been doubted—except, maybe, by the prophet's wife on his return. We do not know what she said. We do not know what was said by the wife of Sir Isaac Newton when he informed her that after observing the fall of an apple he had solved the riddle of the spheres. We do not know what comment was made by the wife of William Shakespeare when he announced that he proposed to establish the family fortunes by writing a stage-play called *Henry IV*, Part One. Fortunately, the Court is not required to arrive at a finding of fact upon these points: but it is useful to recall that many stories as unlikely as the plaintiff's have been accepted without a murmur for many centuries. He said, by the way, that the whale was a white whale; and he asserted that in those regions more white whales were encountered than black. When asked if that did not make nonsense of *Moby Dick*, that masterpiece of literature, he answered that that was no affair of his.

Next day, the narrative continued, the whale in question was harpooned by the whaling-ship *Terra Nova* and towed into the whaling-station at Hawkes Bay, Labrador. The carcass was at once cut up, and—fortunately, before the boiling process—the plaintiff was extracted, not much the worse.

Whatever may be thought of this story, which received keen attention throughout the world, there is no doubt that the plaintiff is alive, and, indeed is present in court. The defendants' counsel, unwilling to accept the episode of the whale, have suggested that in fact he was picked up by the fishing schooner *Heart of Grace*, which brought him to Newfoundland; and this contention, right or wrong, has more relevance than may at first appear to the issue joined before the Court. On his return to England the plaintiff took exception to certain expressions in some of his "obituary notices". Death comes unexpected to most men still: and insufficient praise is given to those great newspapers which produce so readily the following morning a careful account and assessment of the careers of public men; though the thought that in so many offices the record is being ghoulishly brought up to date each year in readiness for the last event must be disturbing to anyone in the public eye. The ancient motto *De mortuis* still seems to prevail in these accounts. The plaintiff does not claim that any of his "obituaries" were deliberately offensive, though he was disappointed by them all. They were not even likely to aggravate the grief of his relatives if

he had been dead. But they are, he says, of a character to damage him in his profession now that he is, in fact, alive. In particular, he objected to the suggestion that, though a careful observer and recorder, he was lacking in imagination. Two writers, he complains, hinted that he was a seeker after publicity, though in fact he is the shyest man alive and suffers a sharp physical revulsion when he sees his name in the papers. Why such a charge should be pressed or resented in the case of a writer is not clear to the Court; for if his name is not known to many how can many be expected to buy his books? It would be as reasonable to blame a nun for her retiring ways. But to say that a romantic author has no imagination may well be damaging, all must agree: and the same, perhaps, applies to Mr. Oundle's observation that the plaintiff was deficient in a sense of the sublime.

Now, it is established law that a libel suit cannot be entertained which arises out of anything written concerning a dead person. Other remedies must be sought by the aggrieved family where the dead are defamed. The defendants say that in good faith and upon proper information they presumed the plaintiff to be dead; that what they published was published only on that assumption and would not have been published had they known him to be alive; that any reasonable man would have thought him to be dead; that at the time of publication he was constructively dead; that the libel, if any, was a libel, to all intents and purposes, on a dead man, and therefore cannot be a cause of action.



One for the road.

This argument, though it was pressed with much ingenuity and force by Sir Ethelred Rutt, the Court is unable to accept. We find that the plaintiff was in fact alive when the words complained of were published; and the fact that he was in the belly of a whale at the time, if that is true, or swimming in the sea off Labrador, cannot deprive him of his rights at law. Indeed there is something to be said for Sir Roger Swatt's contention that for a journalist comfortably placed in London to vilify the character of a public man who is in the belly of a whale off the coast of Labrador might well be a circumstance to be thrown into the scale in any assessment of damages.

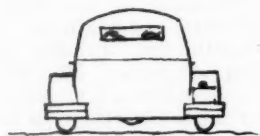
Equally we must reject the somewhat unworthy suggestion of defendants' counsel that the entire affair was a "publicity stunt"—or, alternatively, a plot to obtain damages from trusting newspapers. We cannot imagine a man so eager to secure mention, or money, from the newspapers that he will voluntarily step into sub-Arctic waters in foggy weather off the coast of Labrador. On the other hand, as we have indicated already, we cannot find it defamatory to say that a writer seeks publicity. The mere publication of a book is a request for public attention. Smith, therefore, and the General Press are dismissed from the action; though, since they have been rather a nuisance, they will pay the plaintiff's costs.

There remain the other defendants, and the other charges. These they have tediously attempted to justify by reference to the plaintiff's works, seeking to show that for this reason or that he is not worthy of regard as a composer of romantic fiction. Fortunately, I am relieved of any duty to go into all that by the defendants themselves, who have made so much of the story of the whale. After a strong attempt, and indeed inclination, to achieve credulity, I find myself unable to accept the story of the whale. But the manner in which the tale was told, and the doubts which I have felt concerning it, have persuaded me that the plaintiff is richly endowed with the qualities necessary for the writing of fiction, romantic or other—with imagination, with the capacity to assemble corroborative detail, and that indefinable power called plausibility. In short, it is clear to me that all the remaining defendants have libelled the plaintiff in his professional capacity, and they must pay damages, between them, of about £10,000—or more, if the plaintiff wishes. What is the next case, please?

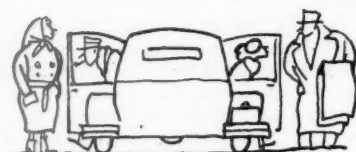
A. P. H.

TO THE MATCH

frugasse



The car that parks just in front of mine usually looks very like all the others—



and the people who get out of it seem very like everyone else.



The car that parks just behind mine usually looks fairly ordinary, too—



and so do its occupants—

The Lower Third

THE Blue Duck Inn is of course open to all, but few callers have the entrée of my small circle in the corner near the potted fern. Not that I am stand-offish—on your third or fourth visit, if you are a fairly good type, I usually unbend a little, lay aside my knitting, and encourage you with perhaps a kindly nod or an epigram or something of the sort.

I was therefore somewhat put out the other evening when a complete stranger sat at my table and began to read the *Radio Times*. I studied him thoughtfully. He was in evening-dress and beautifully groomed. His straw hat, though, struck a discordant note, and I found it difficult to place him.

"We are quite informal here," I said with a wave of my hand.

He mumbled indistinctly and continued reading.

"Pardon?" I said loudly, unwinding my scarf a little and exposing one ear.

He mumbled again, and it was only by rising and cupping my hand behind my ear that I could make out his words.

"Charming place," he muttered pleasantly.

His tones were cultured and exquisitely modulated. I felt bound to speak to him about his mumbling.

"A great pity," I beamed indulgently. "You have a beautiful voice, and your accent is faultless—very like mine, in fact."

He blushed, smiled, and moved his lips inaudibly.

"But you ruin the whole thing by mumbling," I continued. "What you need is a few lessons in voice production, breathing and so forth. Notice how my voice rings out. You hear it?"

"Too well," he muttered under his breath.

"I would go so far as to say," I went on impressively, "that with proper

training you might even aspire to the B.B.C."

He nodded vigorously; I listened intently.

"I am with the B.B.C.," he mumbled.

I regarded him in shocked silence. Apart from the straw hat, his appearance was irreproachable; he was, if anything, a cut above Home Service—definitely not Light Programme.

"What programme?" I asked suspiciously.

"The Third," he muttered. "The Lower Third, to be precise."

I glared at him a full minute, then lowered my ear to his mouth again.

"And what is the Lower Third?" I demanded savagely.

"We are planning to introduce a little satirical, sophisticated fun into the Third," he mumbled. "Hence the straw hat."

He touched his nose timidly, and I noticed, with horror, some greasepaint on it. It was not the crimson of the red-nosed comic, but a delicate pastel shade of very pale pink. I sat down and fumed for a while, then leaned across again.

"May I ask what you do on the Third Programme?" I inquired, breathing heavily.

"I am an announcer," he muttered indistinctly.

I sprang to my feet indignantly.

"This is preposterous!" I stormed.

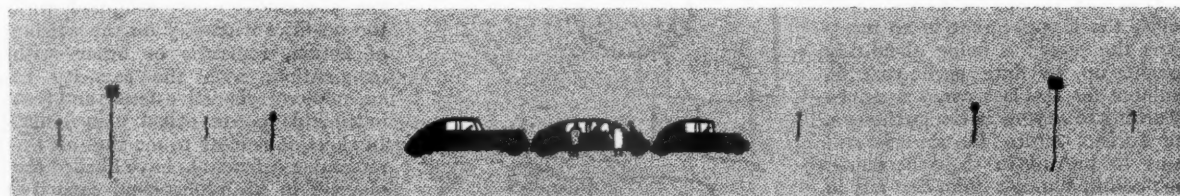
"B.B.C. announcers are renowned for their superb elocution. They never mumble. If you were an announcer you would speak clearly like them!"

"I know," he muttered between his teeth.

He rose to go, but I detained him and fixed him with an ominous stare.

"Then why aren't you speaking clearly now?" I shouted.

"Well, you see, old man," he replied in a loud clear voice, "to-day is my day off."



so why, of all the hundreds and hundreds of cars in the park, is it always just those two that remain completely deserted, every door locked and brakes tight on, long after everyone else has disappeared home?

At the Pictures

GOING HOME

THE most obviously striking feature in *The Best Years of Our Lives* (Director: WILLIAM WYLER), and of course the one you hear everybody talking about—the first point, always, that anybody mentions—is the sailor who has lost his hands. The simpler moviegoers talk of nothing but the impressive and fascinating skill with which the player of this part, who really has lost his hands, uses the ingeniously contrived hooks he has in their place; those moviegoers who are open to slightly more intellectual impressions describe in detail the difficult scenes of unwanted sympathy, and exert themselves to explain how it is that he wishes to be treated without oppressive pity as an ordinary human being; and almost everybody tends to overlook the rest of the picture, which has many merits, in favour of this one overpoweringly noticeable facet of it. They exemplify, indeed, the uneasiness of the other people in the story by paying disproportionate attention to a disability that the sufferer wants them to forget.

The film, as few of you are likely to be unaware, is a long, often emotional and extremely well-acted study of the return of three American ex-Service men (an infantryman, an airman and a sailor) to their home town, Boone City. In essentials it does not offer much that is new: we have met these characters and places before; but the care and competence with which they are presented, and the perennial effectiveness of certain well-tried emotional situations, make the whole picture absorbing and compelling and worthy of the time (two and three-quarter hours) it takes to unfold.

The most moving scenes (I think) come early. The impact of the moment of homecoming is always very powerful indeed on the spectator, and perhaps it is a weakness in the film's structure that these three moments have to come so soon here, leaving the rest of the story—as far as emotion is concerned—to be a kind of falling-away from them. Certainly the happy ending for all the characters seems somewhat artificial, as if painstakingly designed to send the spectator away in a mist of rose-coloured tears. Nevertheless the picture as a whole, in spite of its cautious concentration on those problems of "readjustment" that everybody can understand to the exclusion of anything subtler, is worthwhile as well as enjoyable. A great deal of the credit for this must go to the

beautifully competent acting of those experienced players FREDRIC MARCH and MYRNA LOY, and other members of a long cast.

Anyone remembering *The Way to the Stars*, and expecting the same producer, writers and director to have done equally well with *While the Sun Shines* (Director: ANTHONY ASQUITH), is in for a considerable disappointment. Or perhaps I should say, anyone in the least critical; anyone for whom a good film means more than a lot of stock characters displaying easy charm in a stage world and arousing stage laughs at calculated intervals. This picture is strong evidence for the contention that the excellence of so many British war films was almost entirely due to the size and importance of the subject, and that deprived of that subject British film-makers would sink back to, say, the 1935 level. There is, to be sure, an improvement in technique on the 1935 level; but otherwise the parallel is all too close. For one thing the personages of the story have to be absolutely drenched in English charm,

and the most important of them have to have titles; while a self-conscious exhibition of "democratic feeling" has to be made (with an eye on the U.S. market) in the careful emphasis placed on the fact that the young *Earl of Harpenden* (RONALD HOWARD) is only an Ordinary Seaman and the young *Lady Elisabeth Randell* (BARBARA WHITE) is only a Corporal in the W.A.A.F. Then we find that the young woman's father is that wearisomely familiar figure the Lovable Old Reprobate, in the form of a *Duke* whose interests are gambling and girls (on this part they have seen fit to waste the talents of RONALD SQUIRE); and the basic, worked-up-to situation is that equally well-known one of the three young rivals for the girl's hand who go to see her one by one while the others wait. There are bright moments, and if you like stage laughs you can have plenty (favourite formula: speaker on the telephone says something from which you deduce that the person at the other end has made a "naughty" remark) . . . but I am sad about the whole thing. R. M.

The Window

IT belongs to Mr. Truffle the grocer, and it is a nice large plate-glass window measuring about five feet by four. I like Mr. Truffle immensely and we always exchange a few remarks about the weather whenever we meet.

Of course, he does not know yet that I intend to break his window, and I expect he will be most annoyed when the time comes. I often go over in my mind the correspondence that might pass between us. I rather hope that he will write to me personally about it. Something direct and even brutal.

"Dear Mr. Carruthers," he might say (I hope he will not descend to "sir"), "Dear Mr. Carruthers, I have to inform you that the cost of replacing my plate-glass window, 5 ft. by 4 ft., has been estimated at £7 8s. 5d., and I shall therefore anticipate the arrival of your cheque for this amount . . ."

I should then reply: "Dear Mr. Truffle, it gives me very great pleasure indeed to enclose herewith my cheque for £7 8s. 5d. in payment for damage to your plate-glass window, 5 ft. by 4 ft., which was broken by me on the such-and-such ult. I quite understand that you are fully entitled to this, and I assure you that I am very glad to pay for it . . ."

Then, afterwards, whenever I go into his shop, as I shall quite frequently, he will look at me and laugh and say "Do you remember when you broke my window? What a smash that was!" And he will tell his grandchildren about it, and I shall tell mine. All the village people will raise their hats to me, metaphorically at least. They will say "Good morning," "Good evening," or "Bit of a ground frost," just as they do now—but there will be meaning behind their words. "That's the chap," they will say to each other, "who broke Truffle's window in 1947. Smashed it right in, he did."

Perhaps I am being optimistic in expecting the whole window to collapse with one blow—though I shall hope that very large portions of it will fall in, because that will be so much more satisfactory. You never know with these plate-glass windows.

I rather expect to cause the damage at about the end of June when I shall have had at least half a dozen attempts. A very well known professional has been sending them down on the leg side for an hour each week during the winter, at an indoor school, and I feel very confident. It is just a nice six from our village green to bang through the centre of Mr. Truffle's window.



"I don't see how you can blame Socialism for the thaw AND the blizzard."

Hats Again

WHEN I wrote about hats in my last article I left a bit out. To those of my readers who draw little pictures of people in hats it was a very important bit. I refer not to the flag or daisy springing from the small tight hat but to the hat-guard, an aspect of the hat world which nowadays exists almost entirely in the realms of art and nostalgia. Either way it is a piece of very black string clipped on to the hat one end and the person the other. There is a certain amount of purchase, or loop, so that the hat-wearer's head can move, but not enough to make it likely that if the hat blows off it will reach the ground. I think I have said enough to convince those who draw hat-guards that they draw them rather well. On the nostalgia side it is probably quite right to see the clip of a hat-guard as like the clip of a dog-lead, only smaller and perhaps easier to fasten. I think too that I should have said something about the hat-initials on leather bands inside. These may be sort of buttons or they may be stamped, and being printed they have much effect on the surreptitious reading public; perhaps not as much as the effect of the name of someone we actually know on a book-back, but certainly more than is reasonable. This reminds me, by the way, of those name-punching machines we used to have at railway-stations. People who, thanks to these

machines and to their train not turning up until it was due, used to carry their names about on crumpled metal strips won a lot of kudos from their simpler-minded friends and lost, if their names were of average length, no more than elevenpence.

Just now I mentioned hats with flags or daisies, and if these words did not conjure up in my readers' minds a sort of striped giraffe in top-boots along with a lot of pieces of rolled-up paper, an assortment of pencils of which they had got the worst, and a medley of delighted squeals, then I don't know what will. Heads, Bodies and Legs, as this selection of circumstances is known, is like all pencil and paper games in that it needs pencils and paper and is tough on some players and a chance of showing off for others, but unlike other pencil and paper games in that no one faced with a rolled-up bit of paper with four stalks showing knows whether to add four thin legs or two thick ones, except by assessing the person to the left or right as a neat slogger or a dasher-off. As in all such games, anyone who collects a pile of papers in the in-tray is very anti-social, if only because it encourages the others to read the telephone directories they are using as supports, and anyone who folds the paper over in great loose folds is as annoying as anyone who folds it backwards. There are two ways of finishing off such games: either the players pass the opened papers on or they chuck them all into a heap and hand them to each other across each other, but in either case all they are really looking for is the bits they did. There is only one way, though, of finishing off a series of such games, and that is for them to go on one round longer than anyone meant.

Pencil and paper games, especially the drawing kind, tend in the course of the evening to produce two or three bits of paper voted as masterpieces. This is only natural, for some are bound to be better than others. What is odd is that they so rarely contain our own best work, which is inclined to get embedded in indifferent surroundings and to be thrown away at the end of the evening—a fate which ranks with a fortnight's run in the theatre world. However, even the masterpieces don't look so good in the morning and rarely survive a room-tidying. As for the quality of the drawing you get in this sort of game, I need hardly say that the people who can draw have a natural advantage over those who cannot, but that those who cannot can make up for it by taking trouble over the stripes and spots. There is what I can only call a literary finish to a well-spotted hippo, and you don't usually find it among the artistic.

Leaving art for the sterner side of home life, I want to say a word about the people who suddenly think they should hang their string-bag on a hook on the right-hand wall of the odds-and-ends cupboard, leaving the hook on the left-hand wall free for the coil of spare clothes-line which used to hang on the right-hand wall. It is a bold step, but there is nothing to be said against it; the only result, apart from a good clean-out and rearrangement of the whole cupboard, will be that string-users will be as likely as ever to put their little twisted offerings on the nearest shelf rather than in the string-bag. Cupboard-managers who, every now and then, get a bit lathered up over their household's attitude to their string-bag should ask themselves if they aren't using the kind of bag people can only open by tugging at in a special, rather intelligent way. (Households which boast a special string-box with a hole in the lid are exempt from all this; their only trouble is that to see why the string has stuck you have to take the lid off, which rather cancels it out.) I have given this space to string-bags to illustrate what subtle under-currents beset the simplest known form of domestic



DAVID
SIMPSON

"As from Monday next Miss Whitebait will stagger in at eight-thirty and stagger out at five; Mr. Mildew will stagger in at nine and stagger out at five-thirty; Mr. Begley will . . ."

rearrangement but one, the shuffling round of the linen-cupboard. This is easy partly because it gives a fine glow of efficiency to have at last got the face-towels, bath-towels, sheets and so on in the order they appear in the laundry-list, but mainly because a linen-cupboard belongs morally to the person who arranges it and suffers less than any other cupboard from people suddenly wanting the equipment for mending something. The only other small domestic issue I want to raise here is the interesting fact that anyone diving into the clothes-peg bag (a unique combination of sack, coat-hanger and art) for replenishments can always find just one more clothes-peg until there are no more left except the half-pegs that kept turning up before.

The last section of this article will interest people whose names begin with Mac and people who have rubber hot-water bottles. (Statisticians say the two categories no doubt overlap, but on the other hand there is a big wedge of the community which fits into neither; a statement which, they admit, gets no one anywhere.) What I want to say about people whose names begin with Mac is that, for all the rest of us know, they might just as well begin with Mc, and that there is nothing in the way they or their friends say it to tell beginners whether to put a capital or a small letter after it. Even writing it down on the back of an envelope and losing it doesn't help, because people striving to get this sort of name right have a choice between two utterly equal alternatives, with nothing in favour of either beyond the undeniable fact that the wrong one will annoy the name's owner. Put against this the equally undeniable fact that anyone whose name begins with Mac

will be so used to Mc as not to mind it this time any more than last, and we see why no one really bothers to look for the back of the envelope. To the owners of rubber hot-water bottles I just wanted to say that there is no quicker way of emptying them than the way they do it now—holding them upside down and waiting. It is a rather dreary process compared with hot-water-bottle filling, but highly philosophical, and philosophers would advise them to fill in the time by thinking just how philosophical it is if they didn't know that, however subconsciously, that is just what hot-water-bottle emptiers are thinking anyway.

More Kicks than Halfpence

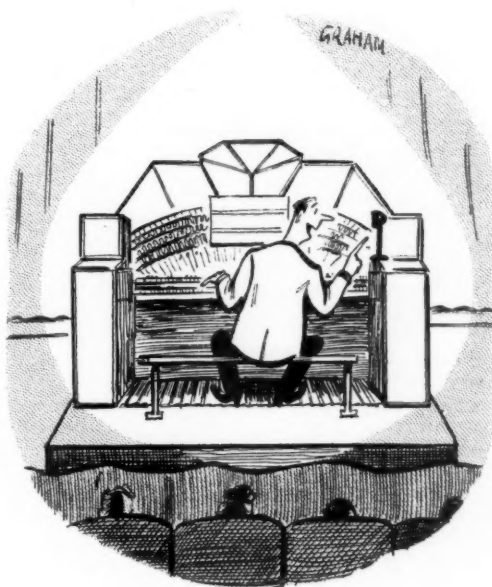
("The second dividend in the Treble Chance Pool (27 points) is 104s. and not £21,258 17s. 6d. as stated in our earlier editions."—*Evening Standard*.)

OUR excitement knew no bounds
When I learned that I had won £21,258.
(I already owed Joanna
The odd seventeen and a tanner.)

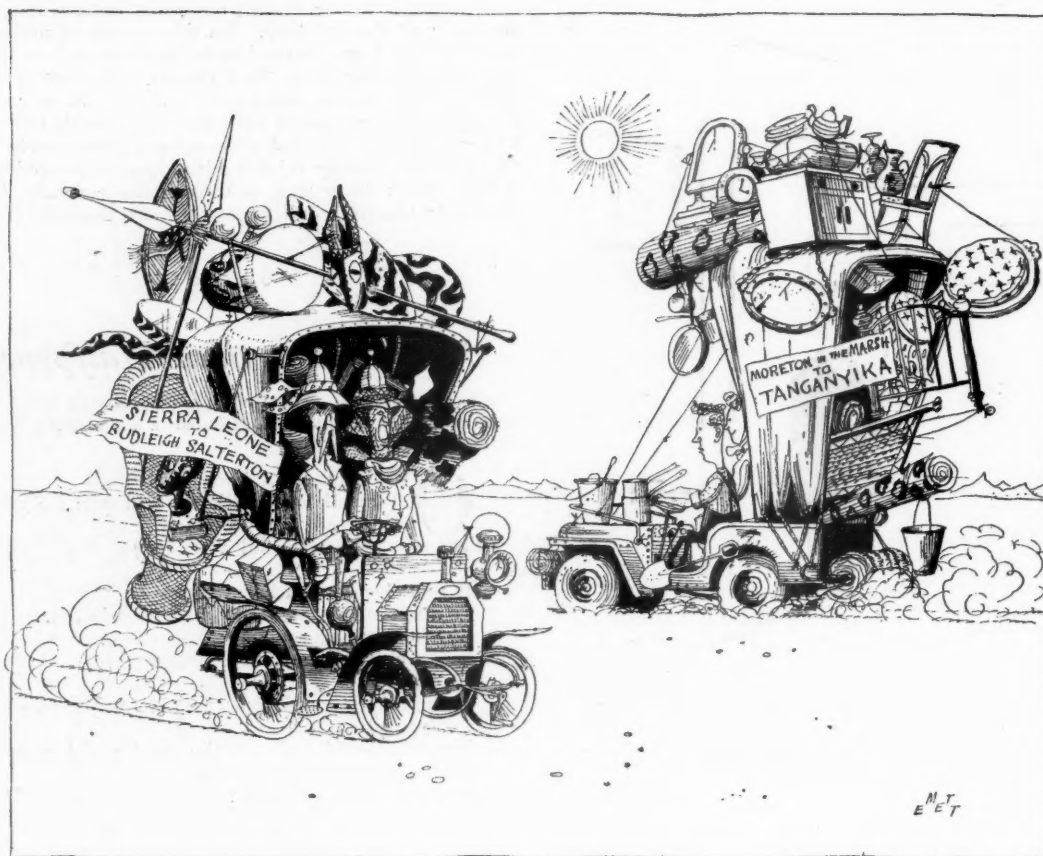
It was therefore rather a bore
To find later it was only five pounds four.
But it's no use repining:
Every cloud has its silver lining.

If she knew the coupon was still—unposted—in my
pocket
My wife would give me the most awful rocket.
104s. I might be able to fix,
But not £21,258 17s. 6d.

M. H.



"... and now for something EVEN NOISIER."



Moon Phase

I THINK Sumerian astrologers,
more patient than we are,
were as bemused
by the moon's changes:
Night, they knew, was hers,
and, star by star,
their charts became confused
as she revealed herself, or made her horn
thinner.

What is her mystery? Forlorn
with knowledge which is not knowledge
we seek to find
her secret
which still pulls th' uneasy mind.

I know—the scientists have told me so—
electrons whirl about nuclei,
and light bends.
The moon is a satellite.

I watch her grow
gibbous, or wane;

I know from the sea's ends
she draws the moving waters; I know why
and how.
But not why she doth draw my eye

to the high fields of heaven, cumulus-heaped
cloud mountain on cloud mountain of the
plain
between the horizons,
all their shoulders steeped
in silver—
convolutions of a God's brain.

Vapour; sunlight reflected from a dead world.
The moon will be eclipsed on such a date
at such a time; in such a place be viewed
from the earth's surface.
Oh, predictable!

Late,
late in the night, amongst cloud-wrack, the moon
stirs
the mind's roots.
Men are still astrologers.

R. C. S.



WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

"... like some watcher of the skies
When a new planner swims into his ken."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done:

Monday, March 10th.—House of Commons. The Debate on Economics Begins.

Tuesday, March 11th.—House of Commons. It Goes On.

Wednesday, March 12th.—House of Commons. It Ends.

Thursday, March 13th.—House of Commons. The Army is Inspected.

Monday, March 10th.—It was a little difficult to believe that to-day was "An Occasion" within the meaning of the phrase, for, as the House assembled for the first day of the debate, there were long and wide expanses of empty bench. Maybe the Frost (and the Thaw) had had something to do with it.

But before long, as the trains from outlying parts began to arrive, the House filled. By the time Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS—surely the best and clearest and most concise presenter of a case the Treasury bench has known—began his speech there were few vacant seats. The galleries were crowded, too, and noble Lords were crushed into their small space, looking like a box of coroneted sardines.

Sir STAFFORD, adjusting his crescent-shaped spectacles, picked up a wad of notes, arranged in neat piles several more wads, and began a speech that lasted for two hours all but six minutes. It was a complete survey of Britain's economic ills. Nothing, it would seem, was left out.

When it came to the Opposition's turn to speak it was pointed out that the Government had omitted to make any suggestions about the cure for the ills thus revealed. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, for instance, said it was an excellent diagnosis, but that it failed to prescribe any treatment.

That allegation, indeed, was the theme of the whole debate—all three days of it. Now and then there was a trace of the "Yah—you're another!" style of argument, but on the whole the discussion was on a high level, worthy of the great topic under examination.

Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS certainly did not conceal any unpleasant facts. He was frankness itself on the subject of Britain's unfortunate trade and economic position in the world. Wilkins Micawber could not have faced with more bluntness the truth that we (in the act of winning victory) had com-

mitted the fatal blunder of spending that odd halfpenny which made all the difference between solvency and the opposite. The fact that the odd halfpenny was in fact some thousands of millions of pounds does not affect the point of Sir STAFFORD'S (or of Mr. Micawber's) argument.

And now the only thing to do was to work even harder than before, in order to earn some cash to put in the national till—presumably to pay the doctor's fees. Until we had done that, said Sir STAFFORD, we could not safely think of having a good time. As so often before in Britain's history, a great deal depended on the coal-miners. They, in fact, held the key to the success of the Government's plans.



TAKING HIS TIP.

"What Sir Andrew Duncan has said will be borne in mind."—The Minister of Labour on capital re-equipment and maintenance.

If they can dig, before the year 1947 ends, some 200,000,000 tons of coal, then we shall, with strict economy in all directions, perhaps get by. That, however, is the very minimum—and a good deal of the year has already gone, with General Winter, that undefeated warrior, taking a disastrous hand in the battle.

On the whole Sir STAFFORD'S review was not pessimistic—not, that is, to a nation so schooled to face the facts of life as is the British people. It was stark and bleak enough, to be sure. But so, after all, were many of the speeches made by Mr. CHURCHILL during the war—and the world knows what effect they produced.

It was soon apparent, however, that the unity which carried the British people through the war's perils was somewhat less evident (to put it mildly) now. As soon as Sir STAFFORD had completed his survey of the

nation's position, Mr. OLIVER LYTTLETON, from the Opposition Front bench, got up.

While the impartial onlooker (as your scribe proudly claims himself to be) must agree that Dr. CRIPPS did not offer any cure for the disease diagnosed, it must be admitted that Dr. LYTTLETON did not, either. The only proposal he made was to recommend a change of doctor, and that speedily. He thought the present Government had put the patient to sleep by the use of Socialistic propaganda anaesthetics without having the slightest idea how to operate, or, in fact, which part of the body politic needed that drastic treatment.

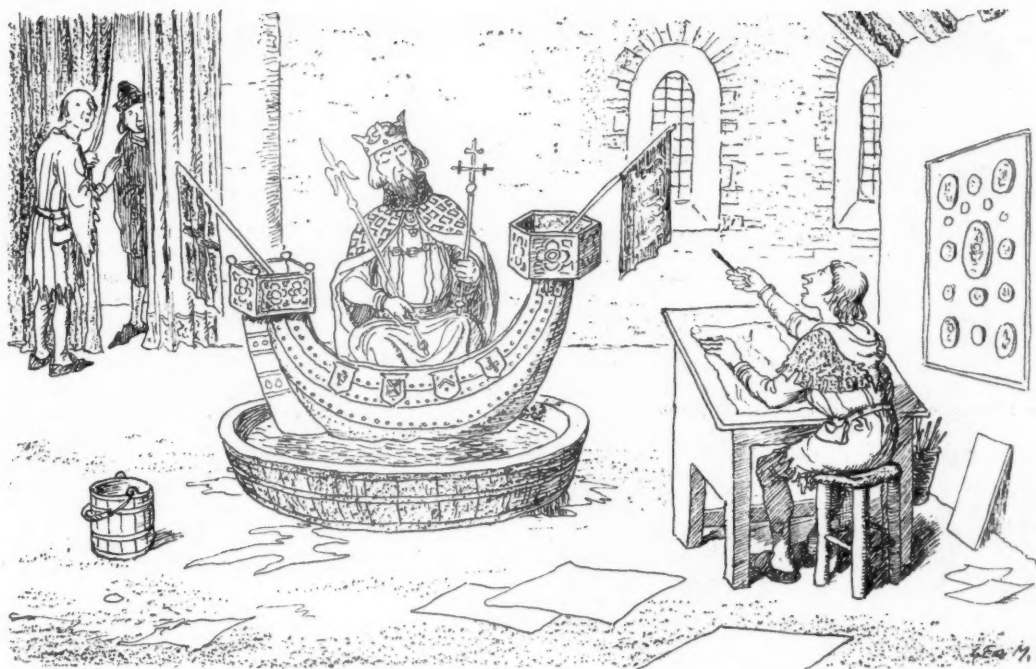
So Mr. LYTTLETON, in a brilliant and penetrating speech, largely confined himself to a recital of the grim and dreadful things that would happen if the disease were not cured.

The anxious relatives, sitting in the galleries and on the floor, naturally got but little comfort from this. The specialists having failed to produce any particular results, the G.P.s on the Back benches had a go. Except that their diagnoses were considerably less skilled (and much more tinged with prejudice) they differed not at all from those of the Front-benchers. Some suggested that the armed forces should be cut drastically—only to be confounded by a rival medico across the floor who pointed out that a nation could be just as dead from political or military malnutrition as from the malignant growth of economics.

So it went on until late at night, when the debate was adjourned until

Tuesday, March 11th, when, reinforcements of both specialists and G.P.s having arrived, the examination of the patient was continued. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, in the manner of the doctor who orders less smoking and more exercise, prescribed longer hours and less demand for increased pay.

When he sat down most people seemed to lose interest in the debate, which was a pity, because Mr. CLEMENT DAVIES, leading the Liberals, made what many regarded as the best speech of the three-days' discussion. His advice was that the sick country could not cure itself by faith alone, and still less by pretending that it was not ill. What was needed was action, very definite and decisive action. Unfortunately it was not clear what form that action should take—except that a get-together of the doctors was desirable.



"No, you can't see His Majesty now. He's posing for the new coinage."

The House filled up again to hear the views of the latest-joined woman Member, Lady GRANT, who was to deliver her maiden speech. She rose demurely and—without the least trace of a quail or a note—spoke for fifteen minutes. Her strong contralto voice rang out in stern denunciation of the Government, and the House cheered her claim that she was entitled to speak thus because she had had most recent contact with the electorate as victor in a Scottish by-election.

After that the G.P.s resumed their work. Not a few of them would perhaps more accurately be described as witch-doctors, for their specifics seemed queer in the extreme. The Labour cut-down-the-Services quacks got very busy, and when it came to the turn of Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER, the Minister of Defence, to speak, he dealt faithfully with these dispensers of patent medicines.

So faithfully, in fact, that the dispensers got very narked and made hostile noises. Mr. ALEXANDER, whose normal good temper seemed temporarily to be on furlough, snapped at the Opposition, and in one noisy exchange was heard to charge the Conservatives with leading the country into the war.

There was much shouting and bad temper at this. Members leaped up and roared at their opponents, shaking their fists and gesticulating. At length Mr. R. A. BUTLER rose and headed a platoon of his party out of the Chamber.

Wednesday, March 12th.—Mr. CHURCHILL took the floor to-day to continue, with his usual vigour, the debate on the economic situation. It was one of his best speeches, good-humoured, bantering, hard-hitting, but with a serious note of warning running right through it.

He came to the conclusion that John Bull had had too little food—especially bread—and too little coal. Also that the Government doctors had spent too much time "mouthing slogans of envy, hatred and malice" and not enough seeking genuine cures. There was a "shortfall of calories," which had upset the national tummy. Then he offered a course of treatment: Total abstention from acting as blood-donor to the rest of the world, giving up of the Labour Government, abstention from class warfare and legislation,

Nurse MEGAN LLOYD GEORGE was next to offer her expert advice. This was that prompt steps be taken to

improve the patient's diet, which she feared might be in danger in the immediate future. For this she frankly blamed Dr. ATTLEE and company, because they had displayed lack of foresight and inability to make up prescriptions.

Then the G.P.s had another go, and finally Dr. ATTLEE himself was called in. His view was that the patient was not so sick as some seemed to think, that he had wonderful powers of recuperation, and that a modicum of undiluted Socialist doctrine would do the trick. "With the aid of a little self-help and determination on your own part, old man," he seemed to say to John Bull, "we'll soon have you on your feet again!"

This appeared to be the view of the majority, for the Government's motion seeking approval of the White Paper was carried by 371 votes to 204. The Conservative amendment died the death by 374 votes to 198.

Thursday, March 13th.—Just to fill in the week the Army Estimates were discussed. There was a considerable atmosphere of anti-climax. But, after all, the House's blood-pressure must be allowed to fall to normal sometimes.



"You can either take my word that it's olive green, nip down eight flights of stairs with it to the daylight, or wait fifteen minutes till the lights come on."

We Miss Bradman : Lose Ashes.

AFTER the feast of cables, columns and commentaries, the searching analysis: after topsy-turvydom, autopsy-turvydom. Here, then, for much less than what it is worth, is the full text of my White Paper on the state of English Cricket (Australian Tour, 1946-47). A more popular edition will appear shortly.

The period under review does not fall naturally into any well-defined phases — or unnaturally, for that matter. It is thought best therefore to treat the crisis chronologically, from decision to decision. Much more in the same vein can be found in my forthcoming book *Retreat from Sydney* (Walpurgis and McCrudge).

The English team began the tour under manifold difficulties. As Lord Beveridge and other writers have indicated, British manpower is beginning to suffer quantitatively from the gradual decline in the gross reproduction rate. The average age of effective cricketers was rising sharply throughout the war, and this fact had a marked influence on the composition or decomposition of the team of seventeen players which left our shores last September. In addition, vigorous attempts to reconstruct the industrial life of the country had put a severe strain on national resources, and the expedition set forth very poorly equipped with pads, bats, socks,

crutches, flannels, etc. By contrast the American expedition under Admiral Byrd was fitted out superbly in every department. No further comment on the inequity of the war burdens carried by the two countries is needed.

As the tour progressed it became obvious that the supply of runs for the home market was generally well below demand. The final deficit for the principal engagements amounted to no less than 541. Wickets, too, were in short supply, and the net output of opposing batsmen fell 36 per cent. below the target figure of 100 (5 × 20). No-balls, on the other hand, suffered from over-production and caused serious bottle-necks. Umpires were very scarce.

MAURICE BUYER SAYS:

The weather beat us. Hammond used the wrong roller but was crippled with lumbago at the time. I liked Bedser. Washbrook was a trier. England lost the Ashes but was not discredited. In the final Test Smith often fielded at long-on. There would have been a different tale to tell had the light remained good. We can do better than this. Bill Bowes would have made all the difference.

After unravelling miles of oily cable I am driven to the conclusion that England's downfall was caused by the inability of her batsmen to get out to the slow bowlers. And when I say "get out" I mean, of course, get down the wicket. A batsman who advances to meet a slow bowler has numerous advantages over the timid firm-footer. He kills the spin at the source, churns up the wicket (thus assisting his own team's bowlers) and reduces the distance he has to run towards the other wicket or the pavilion. More important still, he makes himself appear larger and more impressive to the bowler and the umpire, and should he miss the ball he is in a position to swing round and take another whack at it or the wicket-keeper.

My experience has been that a bowler like McCool gets distinctly hot and bothered when his field of vision is repeatedly filled by the turgid grinning mass of an advancing and aggressive batsman. He tends to lose his length, his bowling-mark and sometimes his flannels. He fumbles his run-up, becomes muscle-bound and tongue-tied, develops a limp and asks to be taken off. The fielders, too, are adversely affected. I have known them become so flustered by the cavortings of a spirited batsman that they have forgotten to change positions at the end of an over. Mind you, this was in a minor game, but the principle remains the same.

Turning next to the umpires—and ricking my neck rather badly as I appeal—let us admit that Messrs. Borwick and Scott are in no way to blame for the débâcle. Umpiring is a thankless task at the best of times, but it becomes hopeless when almost every decision is questioned by the camera-men. The modern telephoto-graphic camera with its infra-red and radar attachments takes the nosey journalist out of the press-box and

right up the wicket—so far up the wicket that the umpire is often unsighted. In my view the M.C.C. should legislate immediately against the use of these cameras which, unchecked, would point a death-ray at the national game.

ROY MATTINGLEY CABLES:

Hutton was not himself. Neither was Edrich. Lindwall bowled three no-balls, none of which was signalled. Hammond is living on aspirins and spaghetti. Wright is not himself. The news from England has upset our players. They are worried about their families. Compton is not himself.

Still on the subject of umpires. Any batsman will tell you that there is such a thing as a blind spot—usually about three feet before his eyes but often as much as six feet in front of the popping-crease. In my own case it is not so much a spot as a broad belt some two feet wide

extending almost the whole length of the wicket. Now what few spectators (and no journalists) seem to realize is that if a batsman can have a blind spot so can an umpire. It is this phenomenon which accounts for the glorious uncertainty of cricket and the dastardly unfairness of journalism. Umpires should be allowed to answer an appeal with the verdict "Blind spot," signalled by placing both hands over the eyes.

To sum up. It was much worse than this after the last war. HOD.

Unsettled

ON Monday at three
It was fresh and free,
And at sundown molten gold.
On Tuesday night
It was brisk and bright,
But on Wednesday slightly cold.
On Thursday last
It was overcast
And by Friday pale and pied.
On the Saturday
It had grown quite grey
And on Sunday the goldfish died.



"We shall have to let them know you won't be at the office to-day—what excuse shall I make?"

At the Play

"BACK TO METHUSALEH" (ARTS)

"THE Arts Theatre," wrote Mr. SHAW, and not on a postcard, "has fairly earned priority with a revival of *Back to Methusaleh*. There must be no cuts and the plays should be produced like any other plays, without any fuss or puffery. They are as straightforward as Punch and Judy." And through several fascinating if exacting weeks the Arts, richly meriting Mr. SHAW's tribute, has stuck loyally to his injunction and given us a rare treat. Nineteen stalwarts have resolutely ignored the Attorney-General's exhortation to work in their overcoats and, braving the near-nudity in which man began and to which, in Mr. SHAW's view, he will revert, have rung the changes on the five plays very soundly, sometimes even with brilliance.

Except perhaps for the savage satire on the two politicians readily identifiable as Asquith and Lloyd George, the work hardly dates. *In the Beginning* is the least exciting, but it clears a lot of primeval ground and was lightened by a wonderfully serpentine performance by Miss VIVIENNE BENNETT in that calamitous first venture in fruit-marketing. *The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas* tears politics to pieces in a heartening way, and here Mr. CAMERON MILLER and Mr. GODFREY KENTON shone. *The Thing Happens* is excellent farcical extravaganza, taking us to a date by which we have called in our coloured brothers to run the country and leave us free for such higher things as water-golf. In this Mr. SHAW's targets are (a) the British, at whom he has always shot pretty accurately, and (b) Whitehall in its larger sense, so far as it can be said to have any. Mr. GODFREY KENTON's hearty *President*, Mr. GEORGE HAGAN's delightful Chinese sage, Miss FRANCES ROWE's *Domestic Minister* (growing up nicely in her third century), and Mr. MICHAEL GWYNN's grave *Archbishop* stood out. *The Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman* is undoubtedly the most amusing, and in the title-part Mr. GEOFFREY DUNN,

looking remarkably like Mr. Richard Hearne, was first-rate. Miss BENNETT again distinguished herself, as the *Nurse*, Miss ROWE did likewise as the *Oracle*, and in Mr. MARTIN BRADLEY and Mr. MILLER *Napoleon* and the fatuous British *Prime Minister* of A.D. 3000 were thoroughly at home. Of the five plays both the best stuff and the best writing are in the last, *As Far As Thought Can Reach*, where man, oviparous and living in objective sagacity from four to a thousand, is liable to only accidental death. Into this Mr. SHAW, still magnificently theatrical, has packed a tremendous

is himself so persuasive an example remains as attractive an idea or so likely of fulfilment as it may have seemed in 1921 has clearly become a matter for doubt.

"TRUANT IN PARK LANE" (ST. JAMES'S)

Mr. JAMES PARISH, the author of *Message for Margaret*, is here in lighter vein. His own producer, he makes an experiment in theatrical shock therapy. It gives him one good act and two most promising characters, but he fritters away his advantage. To a dowager with a bumptious son about to marry a nice American there comes a funny little man who quickly convinces her, with intimate quotations from their past, that, mysteriously entrapped in the wrong body, he is the returned spirit of her autocratic and errant husband, long since deposited in the family tomb. This scene, by far the best, is put over with great effect by Miss LILIAN BRAITHWAITE and Mr. ROLAND YOUNG (of film renown). What then? Well, you cannot turn away your late husband, however much his suit may curl at the edges. He stays, his identity known only to his embarrassed widow; but all he does in this uniquely dominating position is to throw a little sand into some minor works and to persuade his heir not to make a fool of himself. Acts two and three are thin and the end, when an attempt is made to restore the borrowed body to its rightful owner, a psychic tobacco-



OLD MAN ADAM HE JUST KEEPS DIGGING ALONG.

Eve MISS JOAN HAYTHORNE
Adam MR. ADRIAN CAIRNS

summing-up. *Lilith's* splendid closing speech was beautifully spoken by Miss ROWE, Mr. DUNN and Miss BENNETT represented the *Ancients* formidably, in a sort of H. G. Wells-Ganges get-up, Mr. BRADLEY made much of the chatty *Pygmalion*, and Miss BARBARA LOTT, Miss MONICA STUTFIELD, Miss JOAN HAYTHORNE, Mr. GWYNN and Mr. ADRIAN CAIRNS showed up well.

Altogether this is an achievement of which the Arts can be proud, special credit going to Mr. NOEL WILLMAN for production and to Miss FANNY TAYLOR and Mr. MICHAEL WARRE for good, simple sets and an arresting assortment of dresses, cummerbunds and loin-cloths. Whether the longevity which Mr. SHAW urges and of which he

conist, is neither very convincing nor likely to commend itself to serious spiritualists. Miss BRAITHWAITE is at the top of her form, flawless and delightful, while Mr. YOUNG, poker-faced and armed with a feudal-sounding voice and a magnetic smile, reincarnates effectively. Youth is brightly represented by Miss FAITH BROOK and Mr. PETER COKE, and a number of small parts are smoothly taken. Mr. PARISH, who writes good dialogue and can sketch character quickly, needs to cultivate his plot.

"THE WHITE DEVIL" (DUCHESS)

JOHN WEBSTER's classic blood-and-thunder is not for the squeamish, and Mr. MICHAEL BENTHALL spares us none

of its black and surging horror. We are rent and sickened and, it must be confessed, frequently deafened, for there is too much shouting. The interesting thing about this so-called tragedy is that it is our senses only which are touched by it and not our hearts. *Vittoria* is in as great a moral jam as can easily be imagined, but she is far too callous to excite sympathy. This quality of shocking without ever warming is inherent in WEBSTER's whole approach to Italian villainy, but it seems to me that Miss MARGARET RAWLINGS, though she gives *Vittoria* magnificent fire and mettle, paints her too light a creature. The trial-scene, for instance, loses much of its effect when *Vittoria*, savagely pressed by the Cardinal, smirks at her friends as Miss RAWLINGS makes her do. Mr. HUGH GRIFFITH is a splendidly Machiavellian prelate, and Mr. ROBERT HELPMANN's *Flammineo* is also good, though his death might have been more subdued, seeing that four professionals had stabbed him in the stomach. *Cornelia's* lovely speech over her son's body, perfectly delivered by Miss MARTITA HUNT, proves a most welcome respite from the storm. The rival dukes are

disappointing, Mr. RODERICK LOVELL being a romantic but somewhat uninteresting *Brachiano* and Mr. ANDREW CRUICKSHANK too mild a *Florence*.

The last scene is cut to end with *Flammineo's* death. This is more dramatic but robs us of our final corpse and also of that delicious line when *Giovanni* (himself a victim of the blue pencil) commands: "Remove the bodies!" A very orderly fellow, *Giovanni*.

Mr. PAUL SHERIFF contributes an admirably sinister set to a production which should be seen and will certainly be heard.

"THE WHITE STEED" (EMBASSY)

An Eire that banned Aldous Huxley's books and even, I believe (with difficulty), those of Mr. Beverley Nichols, is in no position to claim that its Puritan zeal has been exaggerated, but the events shown here as happening in a small Roman Catholic parish in Southern Ireland carry less and less conviction as the play develops. On the one hand we have a crippled old priest, easy-going, none too scrupulous, adored by his flock, and on the other his successor, a reforming bigot of purely Calvinistical tendency. This

absurd creature proceeds to purge the mildly amorous and alcoholic villagers with a stiff dose of spiritual fascism, taking the law into his own hands in a way which would obviously have had him in clink in a matter of hours. I took a poor view of the behaviour of the Civic Guard, which drew its revolver and blustered instead of getting on the line to Dublin for a high-level ruling and a strait-jacket. When the inevitable riot impends (agin the Guard rather than the anti-mackissers, which is traditionally right for Ireland) the situation is only saved by the miraculous restoration of the old priest's legs.

The play, by Mr. PAUL VINCENT CARROLL, has a certain charm and is in the main well acted, but it simply will not do. As the gentle, cynical old Canon Mr. LIAM REDMOND is admirable, Mr. DENIS O'DEA spares himself nothing as the horrid hypocrite, Miss SIOBHAN McKENNA gives us a refreshing slice of fiery rebellion, and Mr. EDDIE GOLDEN demonstrates to our entire satisfaction the medicinal qualities of whiskey. Except for some shaky lighting Miss SHELIAH RICHARDS' production is very fair. ERIC.



"For heaven's sake shut up, you kids. I want to hear 'Toy-Town.'"



"Poob, we had four frozen pipes and a sixty-gallon cistern slap through the ceiling."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Sidelights on Ireland

MR. SEÁN O'FAOLÁIN'S *Teresa and Other Stories* (CAPE, 7/6) exhibits far more skill and spiritual significance than the usual baker's dozen of reprints from Irish and American magazines. A straightforward traditional style responds to real urgencies of sensibility and satire, and there is no attempt to embarrass the reader or impress the critic with narrative cryptograms. All thirteen stories portray an intellectual disintegration that—world-wide as it is—is here peculiarly Irish. An urban voice, heard protesting in "The Silence of the Valley," maintains that "pockets of primitiveness" are a country's salvation; but it is precisely because all the Irish virtues are in pockets, and not likely to emerge or intermingle, that the give-and-take of a great society is lacking. Savagery and sophistication—neither of them of the finest type—dominate most of the stories, a memorable and droll exception, "The Man Who Invented Sin," providing a far more effective protest against a characteristically Irish religious inhumanity than the name-tale or "Innocence" which touch on the same theme. "Lady Lucifer" is too submerged as a story within a story to make its due effect; but "The End of a Good Man," which can be read as a straight *Conte du Lundi*, wings home a tragic revelation of the strength and weakness of Ireland.

H. P. E.

A Varied Life

Major LEWIS HASTINGS, the well-known B.B.C. military commentator, gives a very entertaining account of the many experiences of a full life in *Dragons Are Extra*, now published for the first time in PENGUIN BOOKS (1/-). The book opens in South Africa, where the author passed his early years digging for diamonds, hunting big game and, later on, farming in Rhodesia. During the first world war he was an artillery officer on the Western Front, during the second an observer officer for the B.B.C. in Tunisia, Sicily, Normandy, Belgium, Holland and North-Western Germany. The book abounds in good stories, excellently told. Two of the best are in a chapter called "Ghostly Interlude," the first narrating an eerie and unexplained incident which happened to the author, the second a gruesome and ultimately fatal episode of which an interesting but not altogether satisfactory scientific explanation is given. The author was in Berlin just after the Reichstag fire, and was struck by the contrast between the apathy of the masses and the tumultuous proceedings of the Nazis, who had placarded the town with their flags and kept up a continuous stream of lorries through the main streets filled with roaring Brownshirts. In 1941 he broadcast a series of talks addressed directly to the Germans, and in the course of them invented a German military expert, Karl von Tauchnitz, his treatment of whom provoked a German broadcaster to retort: "Major Hastings quotes von Tauchnitz; he evidently does not understand him."

H. K.

Trees

The discreditable state of *Our Forests* (FABER, 12/6) is due not only to the exactions of two wars but to the State's inability to determine whether the private owner is a pest or a benefactor. Forests, however, are not only so much timber and so much beauty. They are shelter, climate, fertility and many other necessities and amenities; and Mr. W. H. ROWE has benefited the ordinary citizen as well as the agriculturist in stressing the part our trees must play and how they are to play it. His book is both a history and a text-book of British forestry. We meet our native hardwoods and foreign conifers as co-mates and brothers in enterprise. The renovation of old forests and the making of new ones is tackled from the seed-bed to the last felling; and the conditions, including finance, under which we may become more self-supporting—and provide a great deal of dignified and enjoyable work—are fully described. As the problem is a global one it would seem worth inquiring why a world of depleted woodlands should be further ransacked to furnish the uncomfortable and shoddy textiles that confront the woman in search of cotton, linen, wool or silk. That misuse might at least be spared the forests of the future.

H. P. E.

A Special Correspondent in 1945

Except from the standpoint of the author, who is thereby saved a great deal of time and reflection, there is absolutely nothing to be said for the present practice of stringing a number of extracts from a journal together and calling the result a book. Everything is out of focus, most of the entries are tedious and diffuse, and those few which are interesting would have gained greatly by being set in a lucid and well-proportioned narrative. The following is a typical extract from the *Second Diary of a Diplomatic Correspondent* (SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, 18/-)—"Hotel

here packed with guests. 'Star' of evening party: chairman of hotel, former mayor of Penzance, local auctioneer, raconteur, magistrate, gourmet, W. H. Lane. Family is with Lane." Nevertheless, much of interest can be disinterred by an alert and patient reader from this book, which covers Mr. GEORGE BILAINKIN's travels in Europe during 1945. The author met Dr. Benes in Prague, and, after hearing his views on the deportation of the Sudeten Germans, visited Frank, formerly Hitler's representative in Czechoslovakia. His impression of Frank in prison is a vivid piece of writing, and one learns with interest that in Frank's youth Galsworthy, Conrad and Dickens were among his favourite authors. Although not excessively partial to Russia, Mr. BILAINKIN gives the point of view on the other side of the iron curtain, and especially in Yugoslavia. In France he had a long talk with Reynaud, recently returned from Germany, and was present at Laval's trial, which he describes admirably.

H. K.

A Champion for Kosikot

A highbrow defence of suburbia is caviar indeed. If we cannot help agreeing with Mr. J. M. RICHARDS' admission that since he wrote *The Castles on the Ground* (ARCHITECTURAL PRESS, 8/6) while serving abroad he may have seen By-pass Tudor and Muswell Gothic through rather rosy spectacles, we are bound to admire the nimbleness with which he puts forward a highly ingenious case. Briefly, this is that there is much virtue and vitality in what a mass of people like; that the minority may rave at the anarchical individualism of pink gables and mock timber, but such extravagances warm the personal pride of the modest householder; that "suburban architecture can be described as an attempt to create a kind of oasis in which every tree and every brick can be accounted for, to exclude the unpredictable as far as possible from everyday life"; that there are signs of the crystallizing of a true vernacular style out of the wildly romantic absurdities of the villa world; and that the wheel of changing fashion may bring us to a point at which our present teeming medley may win a period label. This possibility must obviously be admitted, though it seems probable that many of the dwellings in question will have collapsed long before they can achieve maturity. The book is not free from such regrettable jargon as the terrible word "differentiative," but it is in the main well and amusingly written. Most of the time its author must have had most of his tongue in his cheek, but his dissection of suburbia is accurate and has the merit of being exceedingly provocative.

E. O. D. K.

"Blow the Man Down."

It has, happily, come to be a generally accepted fact that the services rendered by seafarers to this country have not hitherto been adequately recognized or recompensed. It is this, apparently, which Messrs. W. J. BASSETT-LOWKE and GEORGE HOLLAND have had in mind in compiling *Ships and Men* (HARRAP, 15/-); but it is hard to see how they hope to advance the cause they advocate by describing British sailors from the days of the Tudors onwards as "bloodthirsty gangsters," the "sweepings of the slums," "drunken sailors," and so forth, addicted to "all the vices common to seamen," and requiring to be "humanized" by methods partly modelled on those in vogue in H.M. prisons, and partly upon those employed by that classic nautical reformer, Captain Joseph Reece, Commander of the *Mantelpiece*. Anyone who has had personal knowledge of the seaman of the sail can testify that the seafaring

community then as now numbered in its ranks a very large proportion of decent, self-respecting citizens. Regarded as a contribution to maritime history, the book is unhappily negligible. It contains little that is new and a quite surprising number of inaccuracies and errors, among which may be mentioned the palpable confusion of Blackwallers with Black Ballers, the amazing statement that all the Blackwall frigates were built by Pile, of Sunderland, and the use of "windjammer" as a technical designation for a particular type of ship. As for the astonishing assertion that sailing ships in the Australian wool trade sported "straight or raking stems and cruiser sterns," words fail one at the mere thought of such a marine monstrosity.

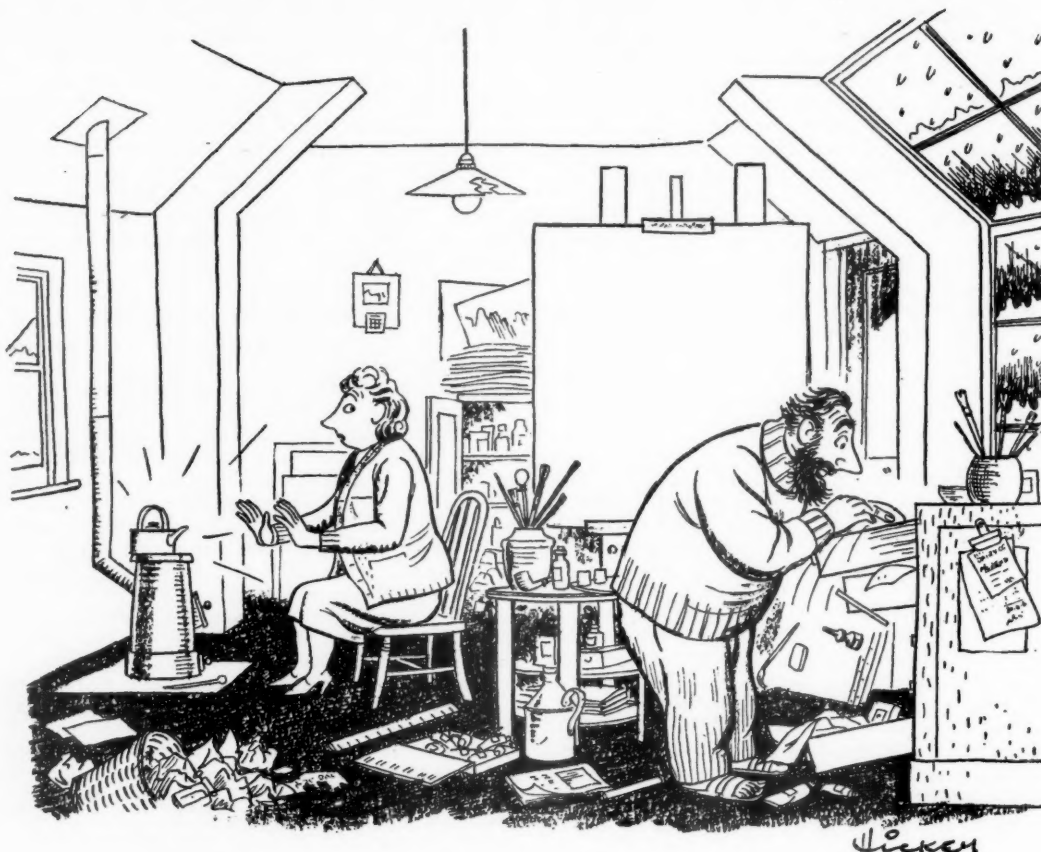
C. F. S.

A New Sort of Thriller

Although Mr. PETER TRAILL's new book, *The Deceiving Mirror* (HERBERT JENKINS, 8/6), is a murder mystery of one hundred and eighty-nine pages, and although no death occurs until the hundred and nineteenth page, the seasoned reader of thrillers will begin his own private detecting at once. For it is quite clear that old Peter Montford is to be the victim, not so much because he is the most detestable of a very unpleasant lot but because he is the most disliked and provides the most motives. The only two likeable characters are an old solicitor and the French fiancée of one of Montford's sons. She had been in the underground movement and showed courage, dash and a sense of strange humour which, when it turns bitter, provides the greatest surprise of all at the end. Since the characters in the book are a great deal more important than the plot, which is ordinary and deals with change of wills and the need for swift action by the three possible inheritors, it is a pity that we are not made to mind more about the people. Montford's daughter, who is a martyr to him, is narrow and unsympathetic, her two brothers are jealous of each other and afraid of the future. The murder itself is very ingenious, and one advantage of Mr. TRAILL's rather odd method is that once it has been committed we can rush straight to our own conclusions. We also, as readers, play the detectives, for there is no professional sleuth.

B. E. B.





"Now what the blue blazes can have become of all my CHARCOAL?"

Back at the Wheel

V—Mending It

THE first thing I need when I buy a car is a good, reliable godfather for it. Godfathers are not as easy to find in the selfish days of peace as they were during the war, when helping spanners were proffered on all sides, nor are they as plentiful in London as they are in the country.

When I bought my last car I was in the Home Guard with Mr. Cuffler, the proprietor and staff of the Edward VII Garage at a dusty Hampshire cross-roads. Mr. Cuffler godfathered my car from the first. He had found it for me, mouldering under a Winchester tarpaulin, and felt that he was responsible for its behaviour. Knowing that it was good at heart he accepted its misdemeanours with forbearance,

and when I reported even the most disquieting lapses he remained unshaken. When I told him that the floorboards caught fire in low gear he would only say "Oh, ah?" and get underneath it with a wrench; when a front wheel began to lean dangerously he would only say "Oh, ah?" and fix me on another one. And when (this happened more than once) I rushed up white-faced on my bicycle and announced that the car had stopped with a loud bang on the way to a meeting in Bournemouth he would still only say "Oh, ah?" and clatter off with me in his gigantic old narrow-shouldered taxi pursued by enough dust and explosions to put any Hollywood effects department to shame.

There was a humanity about Mr. Cuffler. Sometimes when I was waiting for him to do a rush job on the big end he would send me into the house adjoining, and Mrs. Cuffler would give me tea; and once, when I caught mild bronchitis after a break-down on the edge of Ferndown golf-course, Mr. Cuffler not only fetched the car, mended it and delivered it to my door, but at the same time delivered a small rice pudding in a muslin-covered basin. I was much touched, and rang him up later to tell him so. "Oh, ah?" he said.

But there, this is London and this is peace. I began my search for the Good Goer's godfather with a doubtful heart. I had not forgotten the unkind suggestion by a Fulham petrol-pump

supervisor—that I should have the words "Running In" inscribed permanently on the back window. It is an unchristian world nowadays.

My friend Midgley, who runs a car of such modernistic design that it is scarcely possible to tell which is the front end, said that a man called Jack, an expert in the employ of Smiling Service Garages, was a personal friend of his. A letter of introduction, or its equivalent, is a useful thing to have, and I thanked Midgley very much. When I called for some smiling service, however, nobody had heard of Jack. They said that I must mean Fred, and when I tentatively began to drag Midgley into it they struck up a conversation with a man in a pit and seemed to lose interest in me.

I waited for some time and then managed to catch a passing boy by the overall pocket.

"What's up?" he demanded resentfully. I told him, and pointed to my car. I was beginning to feel a bit self-conscious about it by this time. People kept pushing it about, and slamming the doors in a way which only I knew to be quite ineffectual.

"What had I better do with it?" I said.

The boy replied (on second thoughts, I think) that I had better leave it there, and disappeared at a run up a steel ladder.

I called twice more before I found Fred (I never did find Jack). He was sitting in the back of a delivery-van, with an oil-stove, drinking tea, and when I told him that I was thinking of giving him first refusal of the god-fathership he concealed his gratification magnificently.

"That it?" he said, opening one of the van doors about six inches and coughing horribly.

"Yes," I said, on the defensive. I told him what wanted doing, but he soon began to fidget and to exchange shouted mechanic's jargon with an invisible man called Victor, who seemed to be drinking tea in another van nearby. When I had finished he said "Leave it," and shut the door.

I left it a week before I called again. I saw that my car was in a remote corner, almost concealed by a small bus and a few bulbous limousines.

"Where's Fred?" I asked of another boy who was quite black with grease and was dancing lackadaisically on a spare wheel.

Fred got out of the back of a wheel-less taxi and came towards me fiercely, carrying a slice of piebald bread-and-dripping. At first he pretended that he couldn't see my car, and forced me to squirm my way

through to it and touch it on the radiator. I noticed with faint mis-giving that the bonnet casing had gone.

"Oh, that," he said. (I shall be glad when people think of something fresh to say when introduced to the Good Goer.) "Can't do nothing." He squirmed through after me and gave the running-board a kick.

"Nothing?" I said. The list of ailments had been quite long. "Not even the petrol-gauge?"

"Ave to strip it. Not worth it."

"Oh, well. Did you get a hand-brake pawl?"

"Tried everywhere."

"Er—the wobble in the back wheel?"

"Can't get no parts."

"I see. There was the question of the fan-belt—"

"Out of date."

"The door-lock—"

"Ain't making 'em."

"I see," I said. "Did you manage to loosen up the sunshine-roof?"

"Wuffper wuffp."

"I beg your pardon?"

He shoved the crag of crust into a more convenient position.

"Rusted up," he repeated.

"Oh. Are the shock-absorbers—?"

"Done in."

"The exhaust-pipe—?"

"Broke off."

"The wiper motor—?"

"Burnt out."

"I see. Oh, well. And what about the—?"

But the man, whose attention had begun to stray some time before, suddenly started to prise his way through the undergrowth of mud-guards and bumpers in the direction of the glossiest of the limousines.

"But——" I cried, pursuing.

He threw an oily rag down on my

foot and shouted "Ready and waiting, Mr. Chalmers, sir!" A plump man in an astrakhan-trimmed coat got into the limousine and presently rolled smoothly towards the street, but not before he had rustled something into Fred's palm.

"But," I cried again, intercepting him on his return—"do you mean to say you can't do *anything*?"

"Not with that."

"Where's the bonnet-casing?"

"Can't get 'em."

"But it was here when I——"

"Ain't making 'em."

"It's not a question of——!"

But he was out of earshot, trotting respectfully towards a statuesque lady in furs.

I found the bonnet-casing myself, folded flat in a corner under a rusty oil-drum, and when I had hung it roughly in place I got into the driver's seat and presently jerked grindingly towards the street, but not before the grease-blackened boy had rustled something into my palm. It was a bill for twenty-seven shillings, saying simply, "Man's Time." I trod hard on the brake and glided gently into a heap of wheels.

"But they haven't done anything!"

I said, with as much indignation as I could get through the two inches of window that would open.

The boy, who seemed to be getting on fast with the rudiments of his vocation, transferred a streak of oil from his sleeve to his upper lip and said "It's for finding out that they couldn't."

When he had reluctantly surrendered my change he joined with another boy to push me briskly out into the road.

(To be pursued) J. B. B.



Essential

I HAVE not been feeling too happy these last few days, and Sympton has been going about with a hang-dog expression. The trouble has been all this talk about the need to transfer labour from the non-essential to the essential industries. In the past Sympton and I have regarded ourselves as being useful to the community in a mild sort of way, but to call us essential would be drawing rather a long bow.

So I sat down and made a list of the industries to which I thought I could transfer myself with advantage to all concerned. Coal-mining was the obvious first choice, and I put this right at the top of the list in big letters, and then crossed it out.

I did not cross it out through lack of patriotism, but just because somehow I cannot see myself as a coal-miner. I do not mind the dirt attached to it, having had quite a lot of that in the Army when the weapons I had dug with so much care caved in on me. In fact on the whole there is a lot to be said for a really dirty job, because there is something worth while in washing yourself when you are really black. The real difficulties are that I have no head for heights or depths, and always get dizzy when too far up or too far down, and that I am an absolute failure with a pickaxe.

Why I am a failure with a pickaxe

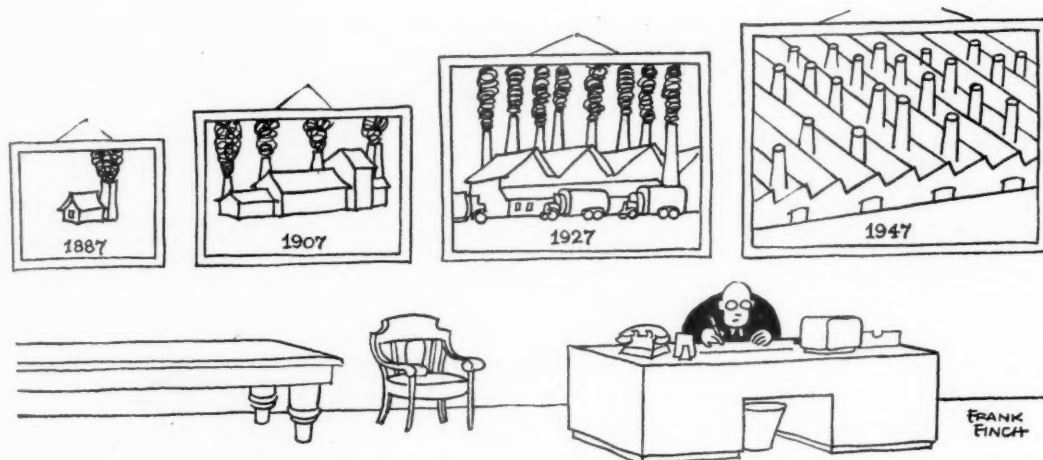
I cannot say. It cannot be my eye, because I am quite good at snooker. The moment when I fail with a pickaxe is the moment when I lower it behind the back of my head ready to bring it forward with a neat swing on the desired object to be pickaxed. It then sort of wavers, and when I bring it forward I hit the wrong object. In the Army I generally impaled the foot of a lance-corporal who was giving me advice, so nobody minded, but I have a feeling that if I went down a mine the figures of coal-production would fail to show a sharp upward curve.

Next on my list I put the Land. In some ways I feel that I should be a success as a farmer, and one thing greatly in my favour is that I am not in the least frightened of cows. On the other hand farming in these days seems to consist mostly of operating mechanical devices of the utmost complexity, and to put me in charge of any sort of mechanical device is simply asking for trouble, because if there is a wrong knob to press or a wrong button to push I always press it or push it. It is not my fault. I was born so. I can just see myself rushing about the countryside on a mechanical plough completely out of control, crashing through orchards and fields of ripening mangold wurzels pursued by Ministry of Agriculture officials in Spitfires.

Building I put third on the list, and I must say I rather fancy myself as a builder. During the war I was in charge of a platoon of Pioneers for a few weeks, and we built a brick ablution-shed for the A.T.S., which was often wrongly attributed to Wren. None of the walls went straight up, but by putting the roof on quickly we managed to hold them together at the top before they fell down, and the place was still standing when I sailed for the Middle East. I have often wondered how many A.T.S. were in it when it eventually collapsed, and whether they were much hurt.

Sympton has just called round with the local paper, which contains a number of advertisements under the heading Situations Vacant, Male. I am shocked to see that quite a lot of these situations are in industries at least as non-essential as my own, but one advertisement attracted us greatly. A couple of good chefs are wanted for a communal restaurant. Cooking is surely an essential industry, and after the number of cookhouse fatigues Sympton and I did in the Army nobody can say we are without experience.

And cooks for some odd reason have always such a sleek, well-fed look that we are very much inclined to join their ranks, from motives of the highest patriotism, but subject to the usual perquisites.

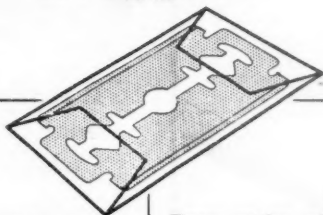


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each blade in its
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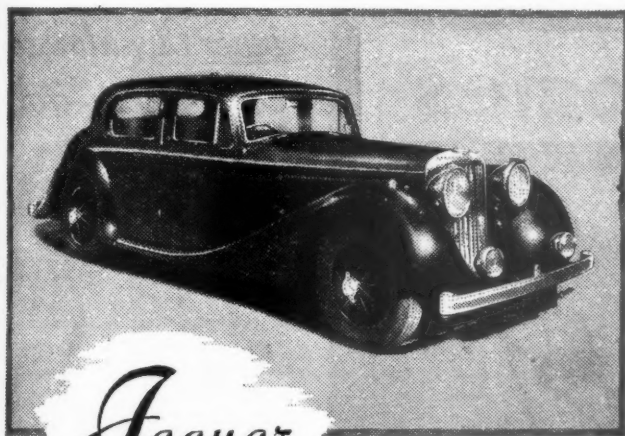


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Who doesn't feel the strain to-day? The aftermath of the war years is reflected in the nervous conditions which are prevalent in people everywhere. 'SANATOGEN' Tonic Wine is a restorative, combining the qualities of a rich full-bodied wine with the active tonic properties of 'SANATOGEN' Nerve Tonic Food.



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Ransomes

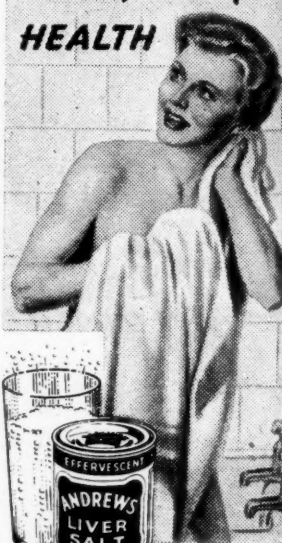


The possession of a Ransomes' Motor Mower is a great joy. By reducing labour it effects economies, it makes grass-cutting a pleasant pastime, and gives years of satisfactory service.

Supplies, unfortunately, are still limited. Particulars on request.

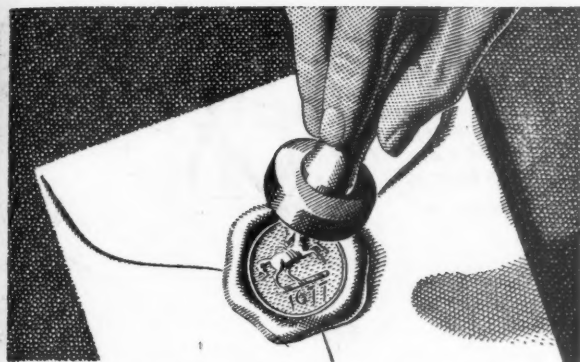
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TRUE STORIES (taken from road accident records) No. 2



WITHOUT STOPPING TO THINK...

It's a common enough case! This man suddenly saw a friend, stepped off the kerb to cross—right under a car. The man was killed outright; the car occupants suffered cuts and shock. Kerb Drill (you'll find it in the Highway Code, Paragraph 15) tells you plainly enough: "Stop, look right, left, and right again... then cross at right angles..." If only this chap had done this! Over 160,000 human beings

were killed or injured on the roads last year. Carelessness is usually the cause. Let us all, pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, take the Highway Code very seriously. Read it: remember it: act upon it!

**KEEP DEATH OFF THE ROAD
LEARN THE HIGHWAY CODE**

(41) Issued by the Ministry of Transport



**...and great news
for motorists!**

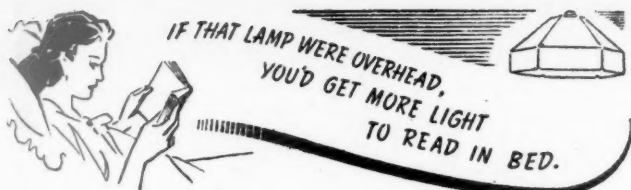
Get it because it's six times better—this new sure-fire AC Plug. Its insulator—made to a formula battle-tested by the RAF—is 3 times as strong, conducts heat 3 times as well.

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- 1 SAVES PETROL 2 MORE SUSTAINED POWER
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Enquire for details
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FIRESIDE SCHEMES

Sunk deep into our chairs before the evening fire, the fatigue of the day behind us, how easy it is to rebuild the world! What they ought to do, we say, is such and such. Why, of course! Then everything would be all right. . . .

But eventually, bedtime approaches. It is Horlicks time. As we take slow sips of the precious drink, we feel soothed and comforted. Perhaps, after all, we won't bother with revolutions tonight. . . . To bed, there to sleep the unbroken hours away, there to awake in the morning infused with new energy.

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UP-TO-DATE HOUSEWIVES

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by which all tyres
are judged*

7H/106